

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 9.

### **Remarks at the Screening of “Dare To Compete: The Struggle of Women in Sports”**

*March 4, 1999*

Thank you. I hate to risk spoiling the moment. I'd like to ask you all to join me in thanking Jeff and HBO for this magnificent gift to our country. [*Applause.*] Thank you.

As I watched this film I had many thoughts. Hillary and I have been privileged to know some of the athletes that were featured. I missed Flo-Jo again. I knew I would never have a golf swing like Babe Zaharias. [*Laughter*] I knew I would never dunk the ball like you. [*Laughter*] I remembered how desperately I wanted Billie Jean to win that tennis match—[*laughter*—for the sake of my mother, my then-girlfriend.

I remembered all the times as a private citizen—when I'm upstairs at the White House now I can indulge my obsession with sports by watching women athletes as well as men, across a whole range of endeavors. All the joy, all the elation—all because the pioneers in this room and on this film dared to compete. And we owe all of you who are here and all of those who are featured, all those living, and all those gone, a profound debt of gratitude.

I also remembered again, looking at Senator Bayh, the importance of what we do here—to give the American people the right to live out their dreams without regard to whatever particular conditions define them. Where would we be without title IX? There were only 300,000 girls all over America in high school sports then; today, there are well over 2 million. The law makes a difference, too, and we will do our best here to be faithful to it.

But finally, let me say, as the grandson and son of two women who worked and did their best to make their way in life; as the husband of a remarkable woman who has made her way; as the father of a daughter I hope will always be free to make hers—what Billie Jean said about the tennis match is true of this whole subject. This is about more than

sports. This is about the fundamental right of every human being to dream and work and strive and the obligation never to quit, never to give in, never to be limited, never to be defined. And our obligation to see that all those who come behind us have that right to jump and soar in athletics, in music, in every endeavor—even some day, someone of a different gender will be standing here giving a speech like this, and I hope it won't be too long.

So we thank you for the gifts you have given us. We thank you for the gifts you have given our daughters. We hope our granddaughters will think this is a quaint remembrance, because all of them will have, without question, the right to live their dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey L. Bewkes, chairman and chief executive officer, Home Box Office, Inc. (HBO); and former tennis star Billie Jean King. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, part of Public Law 92-318, the Education Amendments of 1972.

### **The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy**

*March 5, 1999*

**The President.** Good afternoon. I very much enjoyed my first meeting with Prime Minister D'Alema. I am proud of our alliance and our friendship with Italy.

I have to begin this press conference by stating again our great sorrow over what occurred at Cavalese. When I called former Prime Minister Prodi immediately after that terrible event, I made it clear that we would take strong measures to assure that something like that would not occur again. We have taken such measures to enhance safety; we will continue to do so.

The Prime Minister and I today agreed that our Secretary of Defense and their Minister of Defense will review these operational and safety measures together to assess their adequacy and to determine whether additional measures should be taken to ensure